

Young People's Societies

LIFE LESSONS FROM JOB.

* Topic for Sunday, February 14: Life lessons for me from the Book of Job. Job 42:1-6, 10-17.

Daily Readings: Monday, February 8: My testing. Job 1:12; 1 Peter 1: 6, 7.

Tuesday, February 9: My adversary: Job 2:1-7; 1 Peter 5:8-11.

Wednesday, February 10: My perplexity. Job 21:7-13; Psalm 73:13-19.

Thursday, February 11. My critics. Job 19:1-8; 1 Peter 4:12-19.

Friday, February 12: My humility. Job 40:3-5; Matthew 5:5.

Saturday, February 13: My Redeemer. Job 19:21-29.

The Book of Job is by many of the most eminent scholars regarded as the oldest in the Bible. The internal evidences are especially strong in proof of its antiquity.

The great theme of the book, the mystery of suffering, makes it akin to all the ages and brings it into contact with every class of humanity in every part of the world.

Its study and solution of the question why the righteous suffer puts it in close touch with God's people, and reveals to them the practical meaning of the afflictions which he sends.

The occasion of the book and its contents was Satan's charge that men are pious while it pays, that they pray while they prosper. This charge God allowed him to put to a practical test.

A modern fancy, made very current and popular by Professor Moulton, is that Satan was not as we understand the evil, but "The Satan," one of God's provincial governors, as it were, reporting to God on the conditions of the province embracing this earth.

According to this theory, "The Satan" was a very fine gentleman indeed, faithfully discharging his duty and honored of God.

The distinguished author and advocates of this theory would better see more of the spirit of the book, or else confine themselves absolutely to the literary study of it.

Why the righteous suffer is the problem of the book. Three answers are given. Job's "comforters," as they are sometimes called, brought sorry comfort. They simply pointed out Job's suffering and, as the saying goes, "rubbed it in," by their answer that suffering always implies the guilt of the sufferer.

That young Hotspur, Elihu, confident and self-confident, assured, contemptuous of his elders and of their judgment, proposed the solution that the suffering of the righteous may imply God's judgment upon them for their sins. He was a little nearer the truth perhaps than Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but like theirs it was but a half truth that he uttered.

The third answer, God's reply, was the only true solution. The suffering of the righteous is but a part of the wise government of an all-wise and beneficent Creator, who knows the end from the beginning, whose wisdom none can search out, but all whose power is exercised in grace and for the good of those who humbly trust him, the very tribulation he sends being a part of his gracious plan.

The speeches of Job's friends and Elihu must needs be read with special care. They contain many gems of truth, but their setting, in incorrect principles, demands caution in applying them. As a whole they clearly illustrate the danger

and discomfort of hasty conclusions. Half truths are sometimes worse than whole errors. They deceive us more. They mislead the judgment. They obscure the truth. The book must be read as a whole, for a proper judgment of it.

God permits the righteous to be tested. It is for their sakes and the world's, not for his.

Prayer Meeting

FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 7TH.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND KNOWLEDGE.

Prov. 2: 1-9.

Sound knowledge is that which is founded on truth. Jesus said to Thomas: "I am the way and the truth and the life." When we remember that Jesus is the Creator of the Universe, all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made," we must understand that not only is He the Revealer of truth in the higher realm of our spiritual relations to God; but He, our new life, our way to loving relations with our Heavenly Father, is also the source and author of all sound knowledge.

It was the naturalist, Agassiz, who said he felt that he was reading one of God's thoughts when in his study of nature he made any new discovery. All knowledge is valuable, but in the first chapter of Proverbs we get a statement of relative values: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge," or as the margin has it, "chief part of knowledge."

Our divine Redeemer brings man back into a knowledge of the loving heart of God. The explanation of redemption is that, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." So that we know love to be at the basis of our salvation. So, in the death of Christ we get a knowledge of God as infinitely holy, inasmuch as sin was atoned for and its removal secured at that infinite cost. The life blood of the Son was given to rescue us from sin. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Such is sound knowledge of truth about our Heavenly Father.

A true knowledge of ourselves involves a conception of our high origin, the depth to which humanity has fallen and the height to which faith in Christ lifts us. By sin, man lost a true knowledge of God, and likewise a true knowledge of himself. In the revelation of Jesus Christ he regains this knowledge of God, and also a knowledge of perfect manhood. For in the God-man, Jesus Christ, we have perfect God and perfect man. Sound knowledge of God and of man is secured through redemption and is realized in knowing him whom to know aright is life eternal.

It is necessary to a true knowledge of the laws and qualities of the natural world that we accept his revelation. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Is it true that the undevout astronomer is mad? And isn't it true that the best part of truth is lost to him who fails to know that "all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made"? If, then, we are to address ourselves to the study of nature, it is of primary importance that we know that he who has made us is the Creator and Governor of the natural world. He knows exactly what every faculty of our being is suited to, and capable of doing, and receiving. He knows perfectly the subject of our study, the properties and powers with which that subject is endowed; and is capable of revealing to us. It is a part of true wisdom to learn of him who is the author of our being and the author of every law that may invite and reward our discovery.